

Being Sustainable at Work



We all have the **power** to make a positive **difference** no matter how small the action

What will you do?

Make your change



What is Sustainability?

We need to ensure our decisions and actions now, avoid harm in the future so we can leave the planet in a better state than we found it and the ability for our children and future generations to be safe in a thriving environment.

Sustainability is about how we ensure our economic systems meet the human needs of the societies they engage with, and that these do not undermine the ability of our natural systems to provide the ecosystem services we need on for all life depends.

It's Time to Make a Difference

“Supporting and acting responsibly on the green issues of today and tomorrow is also crucial to the future success of the university. We take our sustainable development responsibilities very seriously and we are focused on working in partnership with others to collaborate on climate change and the green agenda. We will work to embed sustainability in student experience, university operation and our financial strategy” (Corporate Strategy2030)

Whether we work in academia or professional services, we can all apply sustainability principles; not only our day-to-day behaviours but also in our operations, systems, decisions, and actions we take. Together we can **save £100,000s**, deliver a better learning experience for our students and staff and whilst **reducing the University's environmental footprint**.

These achievements, together with infrastructure investments and campus master planning will drive us towards our **Net Zero Carbon by 2030 goal**; reducing our direct emission contributions to zero.

Making Your Change

We are proud to have held a first-class Green League Score since 2012, ranking universities on their sustainable practices and progress; with your inputs and innovations we can only increase our positive force for change.

We all have the **power** to make a positive **difference**, no matter how small the action. Whether we apply a sustainable lens into our research, incorporate the principles into our teaching, setting students a global issue to solve or pushing circular economy into our processes to reduce wastes and maximise savings, it all counts.

This document provides examples of what can be done on an individual and collective level. What will you do to make a difference? **We must all set a positive example.**

- **Check out** our Sustainability Team's website www.gre.ac.uk/sustain
- **Contact the team** sustainability@gre.ac.uk for support and advice
- **Keep an eye** on the portal & communications for the latest news and events
- **Our league position** can be seen <https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league>
- Become a **Sustainability Champions** to drive further change (contact the team)
- **Check out** our dedicated staff pages www.gre.ac.uk/sustain/staff



Energy Saving

Making a conscious effort to save energy at work not only helps the environment, **but it also saves money**. Our annual energy bill is over **£3 million**, but with **your help** this can be reduced.

Energy saving tips

- 🔌 Read the [Heating & Cooling Policy](#); every 1°C of heating **costs £41K**
- 🔌 **Close windows & blinds** to keep in heat, **saving 13-14%** of energy
- 🔌 **Do not adjust thermostats**, ask the [FM Helpdesk](#) for support
- 🔌 **Avoid personal heaters**; they emit **322kg of CO₂ emissions** over 3 months
- 🔌 **Ask your colleagues** if they also want a cuppa; **¾ of us boil too much**
- 🔌 **Switch off PC screens**; 20% of staff turning off saves **£22,000 per year**
- 🔌 **Switch off equipment** (excl. PC's & MFD's). **Unplug** unused chargers
- 🔌 **Switch off projectors** after teaching; every hour left on **costs over £1**
- 🔌 **Switch off lights**; leaving on overnight in an office can **cost £253 a year**
- 🔌 **Avoid the lift** if possible, saving **£4,600 per year** with better practice
- 🔌 **Use lab equipment efficiently**; do they need to run 24/7 and is best practice followed?
- 🔌 **Use timers** if equipment needs to be left with no occupancy to save on hours
- 🔌 **Shut the sash**; fume cupboards can use **£2,000** of energy if not used efficiently
- 🔌 **Material checks** to any fridge/freezers to maximise space & prevent energy loss
- 🔌 **Request & test** the energy consumption of equipment when looking to replace
- 🔌 **Report any issues**; faulty equipment & appliances can waste unnecessary energy



Consider Carefully What You Buy

We can all make a difference by considering our purchases. We can **save money and help the environment**, from stationery to furniture or new lab equipment, by buying considering whether we need it, and buying efficiently.

Purchasing tips

- 🛒 Always think, **do you need it** or are alternatives available?
- 🛒 Organise a **stationery amnesty**
- 🛒 **Buy recycled paper** over non-recycled virgin pulp at a similar cost
- 🛒 **Buying new equipment?** Have you checked its energy efficiency?
- 🛒 **Compare & buy higher grade** electrical efficiency appliances & equipment
- 🛒 **Check for** any Fairtrade, FSC, Organic or other accreditations on products
- 🛒 **Check the suppliers** on their Sustainability Policies, processes & credentials
- 🛒 **A lack of/unexplained** detail on a product or supplier is a sign of **Greenwashing**
- 🛒 **Use your reusable cup** to **save money** & reduce the disposable cups at Greenwich
- 🛒 **Reducing one** red meat meal will **save 6kg of CO₂ emissions** per week

Did you know the university spends around **£250,000** on furniture & repairs annually? [Use our Furniture Reuse Scheme](#), before buying new items (including stationery). Good quality items no longer needed in the University can be donated to external organisations.



Waste, Recycling & Correct Segregation

Recycling systems at home may be different from those at the University. **Always check the posters** for what you can recycle.

Recycling tips

- ♻️ **Set a zero-print target;** in 18/19 we spent **£28,000** on paper!
- ♻️ **Every tonne counts;** recycling is cheaper to remove than general waste
- ♻️ **Check packaging;** some of our streams **cost £300** per tonne for disposal
- ♻️ **Double check;** 70% of waste could be recycled, is it the right bin?
- ♻️ **Wash dirty** items meant for recycling before putting in the bin (contamination costs!)
- ♻️ **External printing?** Avoid overprinting and choose recycled or FSC materials

The University generates over 700 tonnes of waste a year and only **~50% is recycled**. Can you avoid generating waste and recycle more to meet our 70% target?



Travel Tips

Covid-19 has shown us that we can work effectively with less need to travel; saving us time, stress and money. How will you change?

Transport tips

- 🚌 **Virtual meetings** save time & money; return mileage **Greenwich to Medway is £14.40**
- 🚌 **Use the intercampus buses**, they are frequent & carbon efficient
- 🚌 **Cycle locally;** all campuses have multiple bike racks & shower rooms.
- 🚌 **Share the journey;** if attending meetings share with a colleague
- 🚌 **Use technology;** apps like **BetterPoints** give rewards for avoiding the car

Did you know that University business travel **contributed 2,888 tonnes of CO₂ in 2018/19?** Consider every transport need and whether you can virtually attend a proportion of events.



Reduce Water Consumption

Water is crucial to us all. 70% of our planet is covered in water, but **only 2.5% is drinkable** and **1% easily accessible**.

Water reducing tips

- 💧 **Do not leave water running;** we use over **90,000 litres per year!**
- 💧 **Remove the water cooler** and its associated transport, finances & waste plastic
- 💧 **Need a shower?** One minute less could **save 21 glasses of water**
- 💧 **Check equipment;** are they consuming water efficiently?
- 💧 **We pay for water;** contact [FM Helpdesk](#) if leaks appear

Did you know that according to Waterwise a dripping tap, if left, can waste 5,000 litres of water a year? That is the same as **24 pints per day!**



For the environment & yourself

Lead by example; our actions will make a difference and influence others.

Extra tips

-  **Chewing gum and cigarette butts** cause pollution, bin them!
-  **Indoor plants** provide fresh-air and can help destress
-  **Take breaks** and enjoy the outdoor natural spaces
-  **Become a Sustainability Champion;** anyone can take part
-  **Volunteer;** from gardening to campaigning, there are plenty of opportunities
-  **Review your work area;** from water coolers to stationery, is it needed?
-  **Calculate your carbon footprint;** <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>
-  **Speak to your colleagues;** it can bring some interesting insights
-  **Incorporate sustainability/Sustainable Development Goals** into teaching or research
-  **Encourage students** to get involved & include sustainable elements into their projects
-  **Ask questions** in your departments about sustainable processes

Remember, advice is available for ourselves, employees and students

www.gre.ac.uk/hr/occupational-health-and-wellbeing

Action Record & Reporting

Creating a SMART plan will identify progress, support and achievement. Replicate what you do at home at work (and vice versa). Set personal and team challenges and do not be afraid to tackle the trickier issues.

Keep the Sustainability Team informed of your progress and to influence others. Together we can achieve a sustainable future.

Actions & Start date:	Progress after 1 week	Progress after 2 weeks	Progress after 1 month	Progress after 3 months
eg Zero printing start XX/XX/XX	Printing down 50% to ~20 sheets.	Prints down 75%. Using tablet for meetings.	Prints down 90%. Signatures now electronic.	Prints down 90%. Wider team zero print target.

Keep in touch

There are plenty of other ways to learn about our sustainable progress. Remember to join the Yammer Group Sustainability Action Network

Sust_greenwich



UoGSustainability



UoG_Sustainability



All figures are from in-house calculations or reliable documented sources.

